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ABSTRACT

As part of the training of group day care workers in Denmark, training programs have been developed for each of the seven different types of day care centers. The theoretical education for each program is provided in four seminariums; practicum experiences occur in an actual day care facility. Each seminarium trains students in the care of only one age group of children. They include: (1) creches- children from 0 to 3 years of age; (2) kindergartens- children from 3 to 7; and (3) freetime- children and adolescents from 7 to 18. A fourth seminarium trains a selected group of experienced seminarium graduates to be leaders of child care institutions or practicum teachers in day care centers. Individual curriculums of the seminariums are influenced by governmental laws regulating the number of hours of theoretical instruction in specific subject areas as well as practicum experience. Student-related topics examined in this report include selection, qualification, evaluation, organizations and job placement. Teacher qualifications and a description of some physical features of the facilities are also presented. Discussion of some training problems and implications of this training system for programs in the United States conclude the report. (SDH)

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TRAINING CHILD CARE WORKERS IN DENMARK

I. TRAINING GROUP DAY CARE WORKERS

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A previous report "Group Day Care in Denmark: A century and a Half of Experience" described group day care programs in Denmark.* This report will describe the training of those working in such day care centers.

As described in the previous report, group day care in Denmark is divided into 4 types of institutions: creches for children 0 - 3 years, full day kindergartens for children 3 - 7 years, afterschool "free-time" centers for children 7 - 14 years, and youth clubs for children 14 - 18 years. Each of these types of institutions has a different system of training. There is, as will be seen, some overlap in administration and teaching programs as well as a move, at present, to increase considerably this overlapping. Nevertheless at the present time it is necessary to consider each a separate training program.

The training of group day care workers takes place primarily in a series of Seminariums scattered throughout Denmark. These seminariums are completely separate from the teachers colleges which train elementary and secondary school teachers. As with almost all programs in Denmark, the seminariums were first started by private individuals who recognized the need, sought and obtained government support, and developed highly individualistic institutions. As day care grew, so too did the seminariums, new ones popping up here and there. Gradually the government began setting standards for these institutions and developing coordination among their training programs.

In 1885 the first seminarium in Denmark for the training of day care workers opened its doors. This Froebel Seminarium in Copenhagen for the training of full-day kindergarten teachers has been in continuous operation ever since. All-day kindergartens

* It is recommended that the reader review this previous report prior to reading the present report.

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had already been in operation in Denmark for many decades. In 1899 the first male student enrolled in a seminarium. The number and size of kindergarten seminariums, however, remained very small. Thirty years ago there were only 4 such seminariums in Denmark--all kindergarten seminariums--and each seminarium had its own educational philosophy. One was religious sponsored and oriented, one was conservative in approach, one was quite radical and one was based on the teachings of the Danish philosopher-educator Gruntvig. Although they received heavy government subsidy there were no written goals for the seminariums, each one had its own program and seminarium teachers had essentially complete freedom in what and how they taught. While these seminariums primarily trained workers for the all-day kindergartens, they also trained people who later became leaders of the creches and afterschool clubs which have operated in Denmark since the middle of the last century.

The end of World War II saw the beginning of an explosion in day care in Denmark for children of all ages. In 1945 a young chemical engineer started the first youth club in Denmark and built the first, now world renown, "skrammellegeplads" or adventure playground. By 1949, when the first law concerning youth clubs was passed and the National Association of Youth Clubs was formed, there were 33 youth clubs. Today there are over 900 youth clubs in Denmark. While the kindergarten seminariums began to expand, it was clear that these seminariums could not meet the increasing need for workers in all-day kindergartens much less supply trained workers for the rapidly expanding afterschool clubs and youth clubs. Consequently in 1952 a new type of seminarium was established--the "Fritids" or freetime seminarium for the training of workers in afterschool clubs and youth clubs. Thus for the past 20 years this new type of seminarium has developed separately from the kindergarten seminarium. At the time of writing there are, then, 16 kindergarten seminariums, 5 freetime seminariums and 6 combined kindergarten and freetime seminariums in Denmark.

Meanwhile the 1940's and 1950's saw a similar rapid expansion

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of the creches in Denmark. Prior to World War II the only training required for a worker in the creche was 6 months practical on the job training. By 1951 inservice training programs for workers in the creches began to expand. Two years of practical training was required combined with 100 hours of theory in evening school. Finally in 1963 the first seminarium for this type or worker was established. There are now 10 such creche seminariums scattered across Denmark.

At present we find no less than 7 different training programs for workers in 7 types of day care centers: creches, kindergartens, afterschool clubs, youth clubs, day care centers for mentally retarded, day care centers for physically handicapped, and day care in residential homes for normal children without a family. The 3 types of seminariums (creche, kindergarten and freetime) provide the basic training for all 7 types of programs but each program has its own training requirements. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for the training of day care workers in creches, mentally retarded centers, physically handicapped centers and residential homes while the Ministry of Education is responsible for the training of day care workers in kindergartens, afterschool clubs and youth clubs.

Content of Teaching Programs

At present the 3 types of seminariums each have their own curriculum. The law specifies the number of hours the students must have in each theoretical subject as well as the number of hours of practical experience for each type of training.

1. Creche seminarium

This is a 3 year course combining theory taught at the seminarium and practice taken at selected training creches. The first year has 6 months of theory followed by 4 months of practice in a training creche of the students choosing. The second year begins with 3 months of theory. The student must then choose to specialize either in smaller children (0 - 18 months) or older children (18 - 36 months) and take 7 months of practice

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in the appropriate age group in a training creche. The third year begins with 6 months of theory followed by 3 months of practice and 1 month of examinations. This final practice may be taken, if decired, in a specialized day care institution for physically handicapped or mentally retarded. Because some theoretical material is also given during the time in practice, the overall ratio of theory to practice during the 3 years is 2 to 1.

The minimum number of hours of theory to be presented during the 3 years as required by law of the students who choose to specialize in the care of children 0 - 18 months is as follows: education and psychology 210 hours; infant care (play activities, anatomy, physiology, illnesses, hygiene, bacteriology, nutrition) 204 hours; child welfare (child law, children's institutions) 126 hours; liberal arts (anthropology, sociology, international affairs, literature, music and art appreciation) 168 hours; creative activities for infants (paper, drama, music, dance) 173 hours; operation of institutions 84 hours; electives (danish language, physical education, gymnastics, foreign language, photography, etc.) 128 to 390 hours.

The theory given during the 3 years to students specializing in the care of children 18 to 36 months is as follows: education and psychology 418 hours; child welfare 114 hours; sociology 57 hours; operation of institutions including office work and bookkeeping 57 hours; health and illness (anatomy, physiology, hygiene, illnesses) 76 hours; liberal arts 152 hours; creative activities for children (painting, paper, wood, leather, drama, music) 190 hours; electives 228 hours.

The theoretical material is presented to the students both by full-time seminarium teachers and by specialists who come to give lectures in special subjects. Nearly all presentations are of the informal lecture-discussion type. The teaching of creative activities is done in workshops in the seminarium where the students learn by doing. Students are admitted to the seminariums in groups of 24. While a seminarium may admit several new groups each year, each group has separate instruction. Teaching of theoretical subjects usually has 1 teacher (a teacher-

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student ratio of 1:24) while teaching of creative activities in workshops usually has 2 teachers (a teacher-student ratio of 1:12).

During their practical training the students have a practicum teacher who closely spervises all aspects of this work. This teacher visits the training creche to observe the students and discuss the students progress with the workers and leader of the creche. Each week the practicum teacher meets with the students at the seminarium for discussions of their work. The students must write detailed reports on their practice including, for example, an intensive study of 1 child under their care.

2. Kindergarten seminarium

This is also a 3 year course combining theory and practice. The first year has 6 months of theory followed by 4 months of practice; the second year has 7 months of theory and 3 months of practice; the third year has 6 months of theory, 3 months of practice and 1 month of examinations.

The theoretical teaching during the 3 years in the kindergarten seminarium includes the following mandated by law: psychology 193 hours; education 284 hours; sociology 112 hours; health and social medicine 73 hours; music 132 hours; movement and gymnastics 112 hours; workshops (music, paper, wood, ceramics, painting, weaving) 263 hours; dramatics 91 hours; nature (botony, zoology, geography) 64 hours; speech 40 hours; danish language 112 hours; ethics 10 hours; study methods 30 hours; first aid 6 hours; interview techniques 10 hours; care of the physically handicapped and mentally retarded 30 hours; psychiatry 12 hours; electives 248 hours.

The methods of teaching theory and practice are essentially the same as those described for the creche seminariums.

3. Freetime seminarium

There are 2 separate training courses offered to those wishing to work in afterschool clubs and youth clubs. The first possibility is a 3 year, full-time course at the freetime seminarium--a course similar to that offered in the creche seminarium and the kindergarten seminarium. The second training possibility is an inservice course offered evenings to those

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already working in the clubs.

The 3 year full-time seminarium course also combines theory and practice. The first year has 5 months of theory, 4 months of practice in a normal afterschool or youth club and 1 month of elective. The second year has the same schedule except that the practice training is in a club for children and youth with special problems: mental retardation, physical handicaps, drug addiction, etc. The third year has 6 months of theory; 3 months of practice in a setting of the student's choice; 1 week of elective and 2 weeks of examinations. During all 3 years the student's schedules are staggered so that some receive theory while others are in practice. This system makes it possible for the seminarium faculty to teach theory to different groups all year and for the students to need a smaller number of practice training clubs. The theoretical teaching mandated by law for the freetime seminarium is the same as that described for the kindergarten seminarium. The major difference is in the courses in creative activities offered in the workshops. In the freetime seminarium workshops, in addition to the drama, music, ceramics, wood, paper, painting, weaving found in the kindergarten seminarium, now also include cooking, sewing, machinery and auto mechanics. The electives choosen by students in the freetime seminarium are also, of course, different from other seminariums. Different freetime seminariums offer different electives and students may choose to take an elective from any of the seminariums. Electives include creative activities not normally offered (photography for example), observations in special settings such as mental hospitals, or the student may receive approval for an elective of his own invention. During the second year one elective week is spent traveling to after-school or youth club programs in other parts of Denmark or, more commonly, in other countries such as Sweden or Germany.

The second training course offered is the inservice evening school for untrained staff already working in youth clubs. This course, called "Club Training" is usually given in the seminarium buildings but has a separate administration and separate requirements (although regular seminarium teachers

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who wish may "moonlight" in evening school). Club training is sponsored by the National Organization of Youth Clubs together with the local townships and has been offered since 1959. Applicants must be over 18 years, free of criminal records, have worked at least 200 hours in a youth club and have a letter of recommendation from their club leader.

Club Training is a 2 year course. Each year the training lasts for 9 months during which theory is taught for 3 hours each of 2 evenings a week for a total of 244 hours. The curriculum for the first year is as follows: psychology/education 48 hours; sociology and child law 50 hours; "Club Work" ((historical development and goals of youth clubs, methods of working with teenagers including interview techniques, case-work techniques, etc.) 54 hours; speech 28 hours; study techniques 8 hours; electives (woodshop, metal shop, sewing and weaving, dramatics, journalism, photography and audiovisual) 56 hours. In addition to this theory the first year also includes: 2 weekends (to introduce course at beginning and conclude course at end of year) 20 hours; 8 visits to a variety of institutions (mental hospitals, drug addict programs, etc.) 16 hours; 8 visits to youth clubs other than their own, 30 hours; practical training (the student must work in a training youth club a minimum of 1 evening a week during the training year) 70 hours. The total work for the first year is 380 hours.

The curriculum for the second year of club training follows: psychology/education 42 hours; sociology and child law 40 hours; art appreciation (music, literature, drama, film arts, painting) 64 hours; "Club Work" (management of institutions, cooperation among staff, working with parents, working with other institutions) 32 hours; sex education 10 hours; electives 56 hours. The second year also includes the same weekends, visits to institutions, visits to youth clubs and practical training for a total work load of 380 hours.

The youth club training course costs $12 a year and the students receive normal wages while working in the training youth club. Thus students, if necessary, receive normal full-time

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wages while completing this training at night and on weekends. There are no examinations at the end of training. The student, on request, is given a letter indicating the general quality of his work in the course and in the youth club.

4. Continuation (Advanced) Seminarium

Individuals who have completed the 3 year course in a creche seminarium, kindergarten seminarium or freetime seminarium and have a minimum of 3 years experience working in child care may apply for a 1 year advanced course offered by the seminarium. This course is designed for those who will be leaders of child care institutions or practicum teachers in seminariums. Applicants are selected for leadership qualities. The 1 year course includes the following mandated coursework: education 210 hours; psychology 210 hours; psychiatry 140 hours; child and youth welfare 140 hours; institution management 90 hours; sociology 70 hours; health (public health, personal health, sex education) 35 hours; creative activities 70 hours; miscellaneous (literature, librarianship, ethics, field visits) 140 hours; electives 70 hours. This gives a total of 1175 hours of training. Most of the years work is theoretical, taught at the seminarium with a small amount of field training. At the end of the year is an intensive final examination.

Students

The information below on students applies to all 3 types of seminariums unless otherwise specified.

Applicants to the seminariums must have completed the Danish equivalent of American high school and have a minimum of 1 year's experience beyond high school. While earlier it was required that this experience be related to child care, this is no longer true. In fact, it is preferred if the applicant's experience has been in the general community or industry (the "real world"). There are no education requirements for applicants to the youth club training program (see page 7).

Until recently each seminarium selected its own students.

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This produced a chaotic situation with dozens of applicants for each opening, different selection procedures for each seminarium and students applying to many seminariums. Now the Ministry of Education has centralized and systematized the selection procedure. All applicants fill out a form and receive a score using a point system based on their education and experience. Since there are 4 times as many applicnts as places, those with the highest scores, in general, are accepted. The final selection is made by a committee composed of seminarium leaders and seminarium students. The applicants list the seminariums of their choice and are assigned to a seminarium by the Ministry. Students may later transfer between seminariums when openings are available.

All 3 types of seminariums are interested in attracting quality male applicants.) There is more of a tradition in Denmark for men to enter the teaching profession--approximately half of elementary school teachers in Denmark are men. Half of the students in the freetime seminariums are also men. The movement of men into younger child care, however, has been slower. Although the first man was admitted to a seminarium in 1899, there were only occasional male students until about 10 years ago. For the past 3 years approximately one-third of the students in the kindergarten seminariums are men. On the other hand the creche seminariums admitted the first male student just 4 years ago. Only about 10% of students in the creche seminariums at present are men. It is common for a man interested in the possibility of applying to a creche seminarium to work for a time in a creche first to see if he is suited for the work. Because children from broken homes and children of single mothers have high priority for places in day care centers, many centers have half or more of the children from fatherless homes. For this reason the creche seminariums would like to attract even more men into this work. A coincidental fact has helped in attracting more men into child care. Denmark has a military draft for all young men. Those not wishing to be in the military may fulfill their obligation by working for 2 years

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in a government sponsored service program of their choosing. Many men have chosen to work with children and have, as a result, later enrolled in a seminarium to make this their career.

While many students go to a seminarium directly from high school (after 1 year of experience), it is also common for people to be attracted to this work after a number of years of other work or perhaps after having children of their own. In one seminarium we visited 11% of the students were over 27 years of age and one-sixth of the students had 2 or more children.

Only 1 formal examination is given to seminarium students--at the end of the 3 year course. Each theory teacher and practicum teacher, however, fills out a rating form at the end of each period of instruction. At the end of the first and second year a committee including faculty and students meets to consider students who are doing poorly. The student attrition rate during the 3 year course is approximately 3 to 5% but few of these leave for academic reasons.

The law mandates that each seminarium shall have a student counselor. One of the main tasks of this counselor is to assist the students in arranging for their financial support. The only cost to the students beyond living costs is books as the seminariums are tuition-free. A student needs approximately $3000 for basic living expenses each year. The government provides students with a stipend on a sliding scale based on age and need. Approximately one-third of the students receive the maximum stipend of $1500 a year. Half of this stipend is a free gift and the other half is a very low interest loan to be paid off within 10 years after completion of education. Since this basic stipend covers only about half of living costs, students may also receive loans of up to $1300 a year from another special government fund. By working during the summer or perhaps evenings in a youth club, many students do not need an additional loan. Furthermore, students in special circumstances, such as single mothers, can receive income from other sources. It is the responsibility of the student counselor to be aware of all potential

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sources of income for students. As a result of all of the above possibilities, any student who really wishes to attend a seminarium will be able to find sufficient funds to do so.

Students may belong to a national organization of seminarium students. The purpose of the organization is to improve the education of the students by sponsoring educational activities and by lobbying for changes within the seminariums. Weekly meetings of the organization are held in the seminarium and a newsletter "Børn og Unge" (Children and Youth) is published 4 times a year.

What happens to those who have completed their training? The seminariums do not assist the graduates in job placement. Job placement, however, is not a problem as there are more openings than applicants and graduates can pick and choose.

Do many graduates leave the field of child care? Followup studies have shown that 2 years after graduation 10% are not working in this field. But 5 years after graduation the attrition rate is still 10%. Investigation reveals that individuals may leave temporarily--for pregnancy, extended foreign travel, etc.--but most return later to this work with very few leaving the field permanently.

What exists in the way of a career ladder? There are two main possibilities. Graduates may apply to the Advance Seminarium described previously. This years study prepares them for positions as leaders of day care centers or other children's institutions or as practicum teachers in the seminarium. The second possibility is for seminarium graduates to apply for study at the university. If a seminarium student shows exceptional promise, particularly in theoretical subjects, he may get a letter from the seminarium director which will allow him to matriculate at a university, even if he has not completed the gymnasium course (Danish equivalent of Junior college) usually required. Furthermore, since in the Danish university system students take examinations when they feel prepared, seminarium graduates often find they can advance more quickly through a

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university. A university degree will prepare students to teach theoretical subjects at the seminarium or go into other advanced fields in child welfare, education, psychology, etc.

Teachers

The seminarium director and theory teachers have university training. Teachers in charge of the field training are seminarium graduates with a number of years of experience in child care institutions plus the added year at the advanced seminarium. In addition, all teachers attend special inservice training courses in teaching methods.

Physical facilities

The seminariums have small classrooms; a gymnasium for large meetings and for teaching gymnastics, dancing, etc.; spearate, fully equipped shop rooms for music, wood, ceramics, sewing, weaving, etc.; teacher's offices; and a student lounge and cafeteria.

It is difficult to convey in writing the general milieu of the seminariums: it is informal, friendly and yet industrious--a beehive of activity. In one seminarium we visited, some of the students had their own children at their side while they worked but this did not appear to detract from the serious business at hand. The warm rapport between students and faculty is immediately apparent--all one, big, happy, hardworking family.

Problems

The explosion of day care services in the past 30 years in Denmark and the consequent scramble of the training programs to provide adequate numbers of workers has, quite naturally, produced several problems in the training of day care workers. The first problem is the multiplicity of day care training programs and the dichotomous government administration of

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them (see page 3). After an extensive analysis of this problem, a special government study commission has recommended a series of changes in the education of day care workers which will become effective in 1973. Gradually the Ministry of Education will assume responsibility for all these training programs. The first year of training in all 3 types of seminariums will be the same. In the second year the training will be more age-specific but it will also be possible for students to have field training in the new, vertically grouped day care centers (see the report on group day care) and in this way prepare for work in the age-integrated day care centers. In the third year students interested in "specializing" in the care of the physically handicapped, mentally retarded or residential centers will receive special training. With these new changes much more overlap in teaching will occur in all the seminariums, the training programs will be more standarized, and eventually graduates will either be "generalists" capable of caring for normal children of all ages or "specialists" trained to care for abnormal children.

These changes will help to improve another problem which the seminariums now face. At present the seminarium teachers find there are two main types of students in the seminariums: about one-third of the students are most interested in the field work and the practical side of child care and usually choose to work in regular day care programs. About two-thirds of the students are most interested in the theoretical issues in child care and the problems of abnormal children and usually choose to work in special day care institutions, mental hospitals for children, programs for drug-addicted youth, etc. Because of this and also because work in regular day care centers earns less pay with longer and more irregular hours than specialized institutions, the seminariums are finding that too many graduates go to work in specialized institutions and not enough go to regular day care center work. It is hoped that with the changes in the educational system and changes in pay schedules, this problem will improve.

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A third problem has been the inability of the training programs to keep up with the rapidly expanding day care services. For the creches, kindergartens and afterschool clubs the law says that the workers must be trained, if possible. At the present time approximately 5% of the workers in these programs are not trained. As new day care centers are built, if not enough trained workers are available, the local township must decide whether to open the center with some untrained workers or wait until more trained workers are available. With the present plan for continued expansion of seminariums it is predicted that by 1980 there will be enough trained workers for all the creches, kindergartens and afterschool clubs in Denmark.

A final problem is the dichotomy between the training of day care workers and the training of elementary school teachers. At present there is no opportunity for contact between students from these two disciplines. This is recognized as a problem and, fortunately, a new program is beginning to bridge this gap. This program is the so-called "børnehaveklasse" or kindergarten class for children 5 to 7 years old. This class is located in the elementary school but is taught by kindergarten workers from the day care centers. Seminarium students will be able to observe and have practical training in these classes.

Implications for the United States

Denmark has had considerable experience with the training of workers for day care services. There are many implications for the United States from this experience. The following list is not intended to be exhaustive but rather is intended to highlight some of these implications.

1) Denmark has demonstrated the value of an empirical evolution of a training program for day care workers. This evolution includes the following elements: the service in question (i.e. day care) is provided at first by untrained people with an interest and apparent apptitude for this work; local leaders in the program begin to institute a variety of

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inservice training programs; individuals or groups start local training institutions with government support; government training standards are set; coordination and cooperation among training programs is achieved with the aid of the government. Such a process allows the government to support training and insure minimum standards while allowing for maximum freedom at the local level with regard to the training itself. This local freedom permits a variety of empirical experiments to take place in evolving improved training of the workers. The U.S. does not need to wait until a training program for child care workers is completely developed before expanding child care services. Training programs can evolve simultaneously with the development of services, hopefully borrowing from the experience of others such as the Danes.

2) A second principle from the Danish experience is the proper role of government in these training programs. In Denmark the government provides heavy subsidy and sets the standards for the programs. Within these standards the local institutions have relatively complete freedom in the content of the training. For example the law mandates that students in the creche seminariums must have 210 hours of theory in education and psychology but the local leaders and teachers in the seminarium decide what will be taught during these 210 hours. This local freedom allows for individual variations in the seminariums and freedom and flexibility in teaching programs.

3) After 20 years of experience with teaching child care by age levels the Danes have concluded that it is better to coordinate training programs so that child care workers can be "generalists"--that is, work with children of all ages. One would hope that the U.S. could benefit from this experience in establishing new training programs.

4) A lesson from the Danish experience which is of considerable importance to the U.S. is that of training (or not training) people for different levels of work in day care. This lesson is beautifully demonstrated in the youth club program in Copenhagen. There are 350 people working in youth

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clubs in Copenhagen: 20 are freetime seminarium graduates; 80 are youth club training graduates; 200 have had only several weeks of inservice training courses; 50 have had no training. We were told repeatedly that this is a desirable arrangement. Each level of worker brings special talents to his work. One youth club director (a seminarium graduate) said that in his club it was the workers who had come into the club off the street asking for work and had received only the youth club training program who related most effectively with the adolescents. On the other hand the seminarium graduates know the laws, the social agencies and how to run a center. One leader of the youth club movement in Denmark told us that sometimes it is a mistake to overtrain a club worker who has a natural interest and ability with youth and can identify with them in a personal way. It is important, then, in training child care workers to offer different levels of training for different levels of workers.

5) Denmark's child chare training program has been completely separate from the training of teachers for elementary school. They now realize that this prevents productive exchange of information and techniques and they are working to bring these two training programs closer together. Hopefully we can avoid this dichotomy.

6) Denmark has demonstrated that child care can be an attractive career with an effective career ladder. This profession can also appeal to men. In spite of the rapid expansion of training programs, there are always many more qualified applicants than places. In discussing this with leaders of the training programs they credit this, at least in part, to the great interest of youth today in working with people. Young Americans share this same interest. We are convinced that if the U.S. establishes similar training programs we will have no difficulty finding people equally eager to join the field of child care.